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WLW
CINCINNATI

FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

1:15
P.M. - E.S.T.

A SERIES OF DRAMATIZATIONS OF BETTER LAND USE.

No. 166

"THE WILLIAMSON ESTATE"

June 28, 1941

ORGAN THEME: DEEP RIVER

CAST IN UNISON

We took it for granted that land was everlasting;

We said ownership of the land insured security.

VOICE

Tools would wear out, men would die --

CAST IN UNISON

But the land would remain.

ORGAN: HORROR CHORD

ANNOUNCER (cold)

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: DEEP RIVER

ANNOUNCER

Sloping down from the crest of the Appalachians to the Atlantic Seaboard is the Old North State, North Carolina -- land of rhododendron and palmetto, the Great Dismal Swamp and the savanna, mocking-bird and chickadee. Through the mountains, the Piedmont, and the Coastal Plain the greatest resource is its soil, for North Carolina is an agricultural state, with a long growing season, an abundant rainfall, and many soil types -- from the mountains to the sea. And in the "Bright Leaf Tobacco Belt", up against the Virginia Line, is aristocratic Caswell County, home of the Williamson estate-- scene of the 166th consecutive episode of "Fortunes Washed Away."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT

ANNOUNCER

Some eighty years ago, Tom Williamson led his bride to the estate that had been in his family for many generations. Sloping down to County Line Creek, it was a beautiful place...(FADE)

WILLIAMSON

Well, do you like it, my dear?

LYDIA

Oh, Tom -- it's...it's wonderful!

WILLIAMSON

And now you're the mistress of one of the finest estates of all North Carolina.

LYDIA

Oh -- the Grecian portico, the mantels, the wainscoting inside... I've been here before of course, but I never expected to come here as a bride.

WILLIAMSON

Of course you did, Lydia.

LYDIA

It's the most wonderful house I've ever seen!

WILLIAMSON

Come here to the door. Look past those cedar trees, at the fields sloping down to the creek. You're looking at fertile land, Lydia -- land that will grow fine tobacco. We'll have everything we need.

FELIX HUMS OR CHANTS SOME SPIRITUAL OFF MIKE, FADING IN.

LYDIA

Who's that?

WILLIAMSON

He's one of the slaves that stayed with us after the War. Come here, Felix.

FELIX

Yessuh, Massa Tom. Here I come, a-tippin' and a-toein'.

WILLIAMSON

This is your new mistress, Felix. Lydia, Dad told me that Felix is the finest of all the old slaves we ever had.

FELIX

Howdy do, Miss Lydia. I don't know 'bout that finest, though. I just knows I been treated right.

LYDIA

I'm glad to hear that.

FELIX

Yes ma'am, I've allus had plenty of chitlin's and fat-back. You can't beat 'em.

LYDIA

Well, that's a matter for argument.

FELIX

Yessum.

WILLIAMSON

Well, Felix, you'd better help the boys chop the tobacco this afternoon. I want to get the crop laid by as soon as possible.

FELIX

Yessuh.

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE, fading into.

SOUND: Loud pounding on door...

WILLIAMSON

Yes? Who is it?

FELIX (outside)

It's me, Massa Tom. It's Felix.

SOUND: Door opens...

WILLIAMSON

What are you all so excited about?

FELIX (panting)

Massa Tom, you'd better come out here in the fields with me. You know what them crazy boys is doin'? They's gettin' ready to plant taters!

WILLIAMSON

I told them to.

FELIX

Well, suh, you jest better stop 'em right where they is. Them taters won't git a chance to make.

WILLIAMSON

Why not?

FELIX

The bug's all get 'em. This here is bug day.

WILLIAMSON

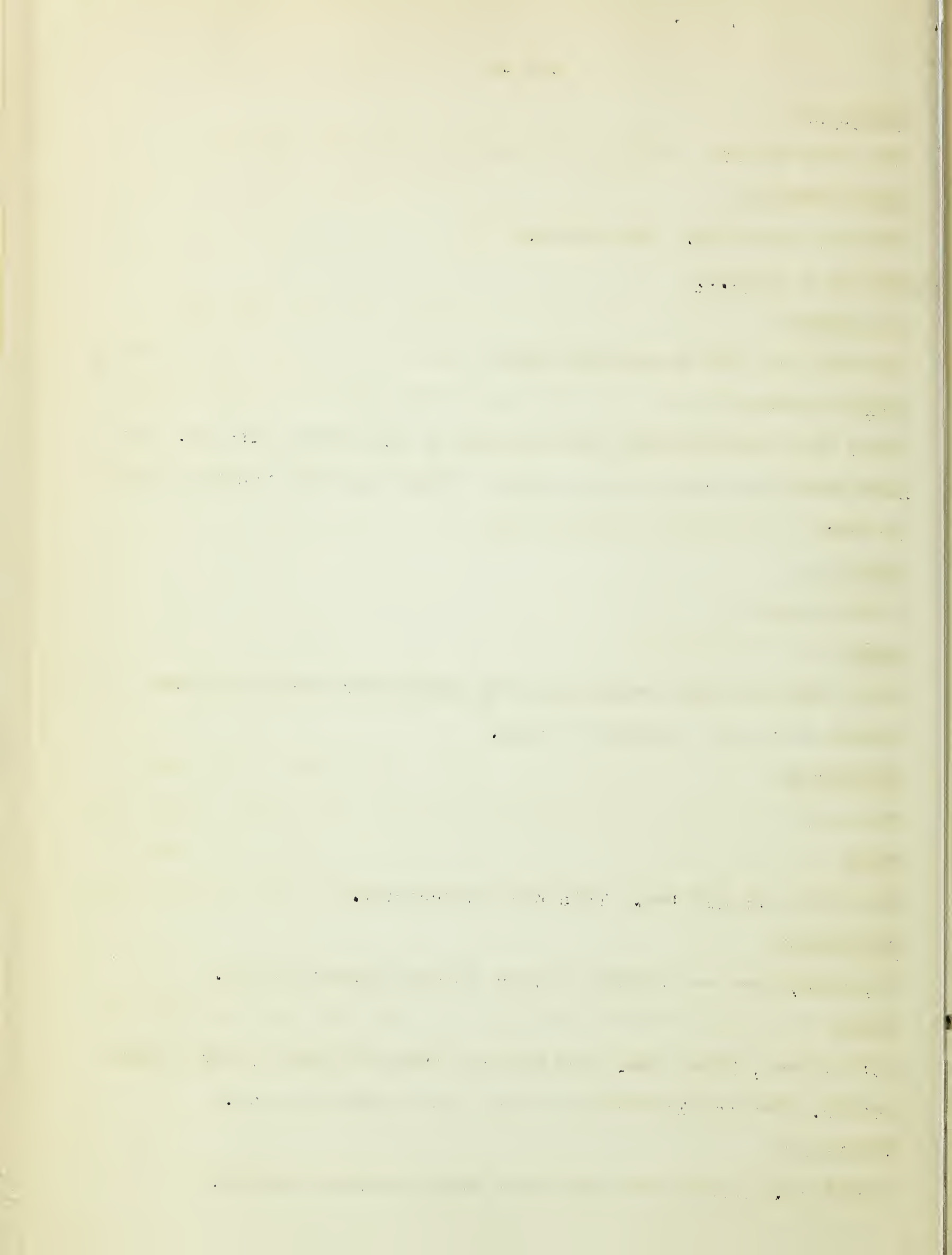
Oh, come, come -- another of your foolish superstitions.

FELIX

It's a fact, Massa Tom. You may say 'twan't nothin', but I knows better. Taters planted on bug day don't never do good.

WILLIAMSON

Forget it. And by the way, where were you this morning?



FELIX

You said as how I could go to Moonbeam Johnson's funeral.

WILLIAMSON

Yes, but it didn't take all morning.

FELIX

No suh, but I didn't want to be the first one away from the graveyard. Nobody else did, and we jest kept hangin' back until someone else leaves. You see, Massa Tom, the first person away from the graveyard will be the next one to die.

WILLIAMSON

I suppose you really believe that.

FELIX

Co'se I do.

WILLIAMSON (laughing)

Next thing, you'll be telling me you believe in whip snakes.

FELIX

Believe in 'em? I've seen 'em. Oncet I was down by the creek when I saw one get after Eradicate Franklin Joe Brown. Massa Tom, that snake just wrapped Eradicate up against a tree, and whipped him with his tail until he almost dropped daid. The snake's tail finally wore out.

WILLIAMSON

Felix -- you get back to the field and help the boys out with the potatoes. I want a good crop this year. Did they run the rows all the way to the creek?

FELIX

Yessuh, right from the tobacco field, right down the hill.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe. The second part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe. The third part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe. The seventh part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe. The eighth part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe. The ninth part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe. The tenth part of the paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of the structure of the universe.

WILLIAMSON

You know -- I wonder if that's the best method of plowing. I notice that the tobacco land washes badly, and the water runs down the rows -- oh, but why worry? Land is plentiful -- the bounties of nature are inexhaustible. Still...

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE, fading into...

SOUND: Dishes, pots and pans, etc. rattling...

FELIX (fading in)

Miz Lydia, long as Petunia is ailin', I'd be proud indeed to help you out with the cookin'. I'se a powerful good cook.

LYDIA

Why Felix! I didn't know you could cook? What's your favorite specialty?

FELIX

Chittlin's and fat-back.

LYDIA

Well, I...I don't believe we'll have that today. I have something else planned.

FELIX

I can bake a cake.

LYDIA

Oh, can you? What's your recipe?

FELIX

What's my what?

LYDIA

Your recipe. I mean, what do you put in the cake?

FELIX

Well, I takes a double han'ful of flour and a lot of butter. And if I has a dozen eggs I puts them in, and...

LYDIA

But how many cupsful is that?

FELIX

Law, Miz Lydia, I don't know nuthin' 'bout dis messin' science.

I just whips up the batter.

SOUND: Door opens and...

WILLIAMSON

Hm....what do I smell?

SOUND: Door closes....pans rattled...

WILLIAMSON

Turnip salad cooked with pork, fried ham, sweet yams...

LYDIA

Now you just stay out of there! I'll call you when dinner is ready

WILLIAMSON

All right, my dear. Oh, what I came in to tell you was -- I finally closed the deal for Sunnyside. I sold it to Wood Covington this mornhing.

LYDIA

Well, I'm glad it's settled, although I hate to leave this beautiful house -- where we've spent twenty happy years.

WILLIAMSON

I know how you feel. This land means much to me -- but with the yields going down, I believe we can do much better in business. You'll like it in Winston-Salem.

FELIX

Massa Tom...did you say...you've sold Sunnyside?

WILLIAMSON

Why, yes, Felix. I thought you knew I'd planned on it. You see, our plug tobacco business here on the farm is doing so well, we're moving to Winston-Salem to start a big business. Senator Brown and I will be partners in the new tobacco plant. And we'll take you with us.

FELIX

You've...sold this farm.

WILLIAMSON

Yes. Got a good price for it, too.

FELIX

Massa Tom, I can't go with you.

WILLIAMSON

Why not?

FELIX

I can't leave Sunnyside. I was born and raised here. I love this soil as much as I love my life. Ever since I can remember, I've seen the tobacco, and the cotton, the chickens and the bees. Iffen I can have my druthers, I'd stay here.

WILLIAMSON

Just as you say, Felix -- but we'll miss you. You'll be taken care of, though. I understand that Covington plans to let some of the boys like you farm Sunnyside on shares.

ORGAN: Sneak in SYMBOLIC MUSIC.

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FELIX

That won't do, Massa Tom. We boys don't know how to farm. Sunny-side needs a good man like you to show us how. I've been here a long time, and I've seen what soil washing has done to farms in Caswell County. It just plumb breaks my heart to see that blamed broom sedge and scrub pine a-growin' where there used to be good land...briars and layers of sand instead of good crops...gullies running up the slopes where tobacco once grew. I'm jest a pore old ignorant darkey, Massa Tom -- but I remembers when they talked about the Golden Age. Don't leave, Massa Tom -- don't leave.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of the Tom Williamson estate, of Caswell County, North Carolina, 400 acres of what was once some of the best land in the old North State. And now, once again we turn to the United States Department of Agriculture, and speaking for the Soil Conservation Service is Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thanks, _____. Everything looks pretty dilapidated around the old home now. That fine old mansion is about gone. Much of the land is eroded, and has been neglected -- but it isn't ruined by a long shot. In the past two years, the present owners have been clearing it up, putting in a better land use program, and already a change for the better is apparent. And Mrs. Lelia Williamson, 85 years old, who lives about three miles away is quick to tell you that soil erosion was not responsible for Tom Williamson selling the farm. Whatever decline occurred took place afterwards.

ANNOUNCER

But isn't it true, Ewing, that soil erosion is responsible for the decline of thousands and thousands of acres, not only in Caswell County, but also in other parts of North Carolina .

JONES

Oh, yes -- yes, after the War Between the States, agriculture was pretty much disorganized. Many of the big plantations were cut up into small farms. You see, the landowners had no money, the Negro share-croppers had no money -- and they had to grow cash crops such as tobacco. Soil erosion became more and more serious. The timber was cut off for more tobacco land -- and more soil erosion.

ANNOUNCER

And what's to be done? Abandon Caswell County?

JONES

By no means. Something is being done. County Agent Zimmerman says that more than four-fifths of all the farmers in the county are cooperating with the Triple-A or the Soil Conservation Service. A CCC camp has assisted farmers. Farm Security and REA have been in the picture. All of this has been coordinated by a county planning committee that has worked out a program of nine long-time objectives -- including a program of erosion control and soil improvement. Caswell County, which has given North Carolina many public leaders, is working toward a balanced system of agriculture. And now, _____, if you please, the "Eleventh Commandment."

ORGAN: Sneak in DEEP RIVER.

ANNOUNCER

"Thou shall inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, so that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or be destroyed from off the face of the earth."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

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